

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 TRSE-00 ACDA-12 SSC-01
AID-05 /101 W

-----064715 060840Z /17

P R 051400Z DEC 77
FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5222
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY BONN
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

C O N F I D E N T I A L LAGOS 14040

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PORG, US, UR, NI, PBOR, RH, ET, SO
SUBJECT: GARBA'S MEETING IN MOSCOW WITH GROMYKO

1. GARBA TOLD ME THIS MORNING THAT HE WAS DISMAYED AT THE WAY
IN WHICH HIS VISIT TO MOSCOW HAD BEEN HANDLED BY THE SOVIETS AND,
ABOVE ALL, BY THE 'QUARRELSOME AND UNINFORMED' APPROACH
THEY TOOK TO THE ISSUES HE RAISED.

2. GARBA SAID HE FOUND GROMYKO 'A DESPICABLE CHARACTER.'
AFTER AN HOUR'S DISCUSSION, GROMYKO MADE MOVES TO BRING THE MEETING
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TO A CLOSE. GARBA INSISTED THAT HE HAD NOT COME ALL THE WAY
FROM NIGERIA TO BE TREATED IN SUCH A WAY. HE TOLD GROMYKO HE
WAS PREPARED TO SIT THERE ALL DAY LONG IF NECESSARY AND EVEN
TALK WITH GROMYKO'S MOST JUNIOR ASSOCIATES, BUT HE WOULD NOT LEAVE
UNTIL HE HAD EXHAUSTED HIS AGENDA. THIS APPARENTLY TURNED
GROMYKO AROUND AND THE MEETING WITH GROMYKO WAS EXTENDED FOR
SEVERAL HOURS.

3. GARBA SAID THE SOVIET APPROACH TO THE ETHIOPIAN/SOMALIAN PROBLEM WAS INSENSITIVE AND PEREMPTORY. GROMYKO PUSHED VERY HARD FOR NIGERIAN SUPPORT OF SOVIET SPONSORSHIP OF ETHIOPIA, ARGUING THAT THE PRINCIPLE OF TERRITORIAL INTERGRITY OUGHT TO BE A MATTER OF PRIME CONCERN TO NIGERIA. GARBA COUNTERED THAT NIGERIA'S RESPONSIBILITY AS A DESIGNATED INTERMEDIATOR OF THE PROBLEM OBLIGED NIGERIA TO PUT ITSELF ABOVE SUCH FAVORITISM TOWARD EITHER OF THE SIDES. GARBA TOLD ME HE GOT NOWHERE WITH HIS PLEAS FOR AN EVEN-HANDED APPROACH BY THE SOVIETS OR FOR A MODERATION OF THEIR MILITARY SUPPLY RELATIONSHIP WITH ETHIOPIA. WHEN GARBA GOT BACK TO LAGOS, OBASANJO SAID, 'YOU SHOULD HAVE GOT THERE SOONER AT THE TIME WHEN THE SOVIETS WERE SUPPLYING BOTH SIDES.'

4. WITH REGARD TO RHODESIA, I HAD NO CHANCE TO GET DETAILS ON THE SOVIET RESPONSE. GARBA MERELY COMMENTED THAT THE SOVIETS WERE BEING MOST UNHELPFUL AND STUBBORN.

5. AS FOR NAMIBIA, GARBA WAS SHOCKED BY INADEQUACIES OF GROMYKO'S BRIEFINGS AND INFORMATION BASE REGARDING SUCH A COMPLEX PROBLEM. HE FOUND THE SOVIETS GENERALLY FIXED IN THEIR VIEWS ON NAMIBIAN ISSUE AND UNWILLING TO GIVE SERIOUS CONSIDERATION TO HIS PRESENTATIONS.

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